

**Washington, DC** - Today **Rep. Brad Miller (NC-13)** voted today in favor of three immigration bills that he hopes will spark an honest effort for comprehensive immigration reform.

"Republican leaders have been unwilling in the past to put forward common sense measures to control the illegal immigration problem" said Miller. "Unfortunately, Republicans in Congress have been more interested in playing politics than fixing a problem."

The Congressman added since September 11th, Democrats have tried seven times to improve border security funding.

"Had Democrats been successful, our country would now have several thousand more border patrol and custom agents as well as 14,000 more detention beds," Miller said.

### **Congressman Miller voted today to:**

- 1) Impose prison terms of up to 20 years for those who knowingly construct or finance an unauthorized tunnel under a U.S. border. People who permit the construction of such a tunnel could face 10 years in prison. An estimated 50 tunnels used to smuggle narcotics and illegal immigrants have been discovered along the Mexican border since 1990 - 36 of those in the last five years.
- 2) Allow the Department of Homeland Security to hold illegal immigrants detained for crimes or as threats to national security beyond the current limit of six months, and set up expedited procedures for deportation. The bill includes legal protections for people being held to challenge detention. The measure would also make it easier to detain and deport illegal immigrants found to be part of criminal street gangs. It passed 328-95.
- 3) Reaffirm the authority of state and local law enforcement to arrest, detain and transfer to federal custody illegal immigrants. Today's vote reemphasizes the Congressman's commitment to local law enforcement to maintain discretion in these arrests. The bill also requests the

Justice Department to increase the number of attorneys prosecuting immigrant smuggling cases. The measure closes loopholes that have led to "catch and release" policies in which illegal immigrants are released because they cannot be immediately deported.